

~~SECRET~~

SECURITY INFORMATION

NSC BRIEFING

28 October 1953

TROUBLE REPORTED BREWING IN SAUDI ARABIA

1. Two recent reports, [REDACTED] 25X1X6

25X1X6 [REDACTED], say:

(a) That the central government is
losing control,

(b) And that when the King Ibn Saud --
who is now sick -- dies, his two older sons
will fight for the throne.

(c) Under these conditions, tribal
warfare is likely to break out and attacks
against foreigners may occur.

-1-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

SECURITY INFORMATION

2. According to one of the reports, the current strike of 90 percent of the native workers at ARAMCO's installation is Communist-inspired.

3. This bleak picture is not fully supported by American official reporting:

(a) US diplomats have generally suggested that King Ibn Saud's death would not result in an upheaval.

(b) Crown Prince Saud was believed capable of succeeding to power without disturbances.

-2-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~
SECURITY INFORMATION

4. In recent months, however, official reporting has tended to become somewhat more pessimistic over the picture developing in Saudi Arabia, particularly the oil strike.

(a) Apparently, a small group of determined native organizers were able to defy the government and produce an effective work stoppage.

(b) Communist literature was found in the homes of twelve of these leaders and the leftist press in Beirut openly supported them

(c) Only after the army had arrested over a thousand was the strike broken a few days ago.

-3-
~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

25X6A

SECURITY INFORMATION

5.



(a) Government relations with the oil company have been strained in recent months, chiefly as a result of Saudi desire to enlarge its oil income.

(b) The government maintains a strong anti-foreign attitude generally, and the recent strike brought out "Christian dogs" slogans on the part of the strikers.

(c) Anti-Western and anti-American sentiment could easily be touched off. Some 6,000 Americans are resident in Saudi Arabia, mostly in the Dhahran area.

-4-

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

SECURITY INFORMATION

6. The king's death might be a signal for re-opening family and tribal rivalries long suppressed by him.

(a) The speed and determination with which Crown Prince Saud acts upon the death of his father may well determine whether or not the central government of Saudi Arabia continues to exist.

(b) His inept handling of the Dhahran strike raises serious doubt as to his ability to take over.

-5-

~~SECRET~~